

SOLUTIONS
OF
BISHOP COLENSO'S
BIBLE PROBLEMS,

*In the Form of an Address to the
Protestant Church.*

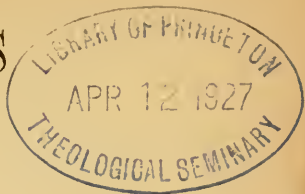
BY AN UNKNOWN PEN.

LONDON :
JARROLD & SONS, 12, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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PROTESTANT CHURCH.

LONDON :

JARROLD AND SONS, 12, PATERNOSTER ROW.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

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CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

In ancient times, when God's former people, Israel, were held in suspense by the specious doctrines of the prophets of Baal, then did the prophet Elijah appeal to them, and asked—"How long halt ye between two opinions?—If the Lord be God, follow Him! but if Baal, then follow him!" So now in these latter days, when men, in the garb of shepherds of Christ's flock, are charging our Holy Bible with falsehoods—when they deny the inspiration of Scripture—and when a Bishop of the Protestant Church presumes to review the ordinances delivered by Jehovah, on Mount Sinai, and to call at least one of those divine enactments "A brutal usage," then, I think, a climax is reached; then it becomes the duty of every Christian to put Elijah's question home to himself, and ask, "Am I a real believer? or am I a sceptic? Is the God of Abraham the God I trust? or has some ideal god usurped my heart? Do I regard God as the Author and Ruler of the universe? or do I secretly disown His handiwork?"

But, Christian brethren, when Bishop Colenso not merely makes these bold assertions, but publicly challenges the upholders of the Faith (once delivered to the saints, *Jude 3*,) to come forward and bring some valid, tangible, objections to his theories, then surely it is excusable if some unknown shepherd go forth with staff and sling to meet the learned champion, on his own ground; not for honour or reward, but to take away the reproach from Israel. And God grant that the simple facts of this little missile may sink deeply into the forehead of the learned doctor, and may bring him to the dust in contrition, ere his breath ceases, and his soul experiences that eternity of

woe which he would fain persuade others does not really await them.

My object, therefore, will be to bring forward evidence to prove that Bishop Colenso has misapprehended some of the fundamental principles of science and divinity. To point out that science, fairly treated, actually confirms biblical revelation, instead of contradicting it. And, finally, to put the reader in a right train of thoughts for adjusting reason, of the present age, to the Bible history of generations bygone. For, I hold, it is just as unreasonable for us to assert *the impossibility* of events recorded as being performed miraculously (in an age when miracles were essentially necessary), as it would be for the men of those early days to form an opinion of our railway travelling, or book-making; or, more especially, of science bringing down the fire from heaven in the sight of men, (*Ier.* xiii. 13) and employing it for telegraphic purposes; so that by it the ideas of minds are linked together, though separated by hundreds of miles. They would not understand this fact; nor can we always fathom (though we must believe,) the records of that early period.

Before entering on my task, however, I must protest against the very *unreasonable* advice Bishop Colenso gives to young students of the Bible. He directs them how to divest their minds of any inherent feelings of reverence for the sacred volume. I ask, would he, on the same principle, train a young pupil to dispute, or disbelieve, the discoveries of former men of science? Would he persuade those young pupils that their natural talents and their untrained powers (be they never so great,) were quite capable of grasping at first sight, or else of rejecting, those mighty truths which Sir Isaac Newton discovered step by step? Or would he not rather tell them to exercise a certain amount of faith in the results obtained by others; and promise that every progressive step in the path trodden by former discoverers, would yield satisfactory proofs of the correctness of their deductions? Instead of which, Bishop Colenso bids them approach their Bible with suspicion, and seems

to favour the rejection of every problem they cannot solve at sight. He would have them treat it, not as a messenger from a far-off realm, bringing tidings of good news, but as a false-witness, coming forward to support the pretensions of some interested party; and that interested party (as the Bishop seems to regard it) is nothing less than the Established Faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

After this protest I need scarcely apologize for not following the precise order in which Bishop Colenso arranges his objections to the Bible. A riddle seems marvellously easy when you have found out its solution; so will the Bishop's Bible riddles, when the reader sees what are his views of the Messiah! But as any tangled skein only becomes more intricate by pulling hastily at the first thread that presents itself; so, doubtlessly, I should bewilder the reader by commencing my refutation of Bishop Colenso's errors with an elucidation of his arithmetical puzzle about genealogies, wherewith he sets out. The fact is, Bishop Colenso appears in the light of an advocate pleading a nameless cause; evidently he has some masked battery concealed. He attacks Moses, he repudiates the Prophets; and, as we shall see from his own words, he aims at proving (though he does not assert it,) that Jesus Christ is not very God! For this purpose he manages texts of Scripture as skilfully as a barrister does his witnesses; some he keeps in the back-ground till late in the day; some he puts foremost, for the jury to expend their vigour upon, before the heat of the real contest begins. Other verses he has been proved to misquote; while, in more than one instance, he brings forward verses, as witnesses on his side, apparently for the sole object of preventing their being brought forward with greater effect to contradict his assertions.

Unhesitatingly, therefore, I appeal to you, as the jury in this most important case. A case in which your verdict will affect yourself more than any one besides, forasmuch as that verdict will be the pivot of the balance whereon hinges an eternity of bliss or woe to you! Once more, therefore, I appeal to you, in

Elijah's words, and actuated by his spirit, saying, "If the Lord be God, follow Him." Follow His Word, and have respect to His Revelation; but if, in this age of seared consciences, and one-sided reason, and science devoted to destructive appliances—I say, if in this age, conscience, reason, and science, are regarded as gods, rather than as faint shadows of God's wisdom reflected in man's comprehension; I say if these be the new gods of the day, then follow them; but, in common honesty, renounce the title of Christianity!

I commence my task, then, by pointing out the loose thread that runs all through Bishop Colenso's work; for having once detected that mischievous thread, the difficulty of the riddle will be materially lessened. It appears, then, that Bishop Colenso considers the Messiah only in the light of a superior man, rather than as the actual Son of God in the form of man—perfect God and perfect man! I say, this is the key to Bishop Colenso's work. And because he finds Moses and the prophets all oppose such a view, therefore he tries to bring in Moses as a false witness, and to throw a veil of obscurity over the prophetic writings.

Reader, this is no exaggeration of the learned Doctor's views. Read his printed words as follows: Speaking of the Messiah, he says,—“It is not to be supposed that in His human nature, He (Jesus) was acquainted, more than any educated Jew of the age, with the mysteries of all modern sciences; nor,” continues Bishop Colenso, “with St. Luke's expression before us (*Luke xi. 52*), ‘Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man’—can it be seriously maintained, that as an infant, or young child, he possessed a knowledge surpassing that of the most pious and learned adults of His own nation, upon the subject of the authorship and age of the different portions of the Pentateuch.”

Such are Bishop Colenso's own words concerning the Messiah, from which it is apparent that, whatever he thinks about the Son of God previous to the incarnation, or how he regards Him

now that he is re-ascended into Heaven ; yet that Bishop Colenso actually regards Him, while on earth, merely as a good man, or at best as a superior prophet ; instead of regarding Him as perfect God, veiled in flesh, that we might have access to Him without being terrified—voluntarily divesting Himself of royal apparel, and humbling Himself to wear the inferior garb of human nature. Thus Bishop Colenso once more observes,—“ Why should it be thought that He (Jesus) would speak with certain divine knowledge on the matter of the Pentateuch, more than upon other matters of ordinary science or history ? ”

Why, I ask, does Bishop Colenso make such a statement ? Is it because Our Lord spoke of the rich man’s soul crying from the torments of hell, and imploring Abraham to send to his brethren who were still alive on the earth ? Or is it because of Abraham’s reply, “ They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them ? ”

Why, or wherefore, we will not now stop to enquire ; but will simply go to the fact that Bishop Colenso regards the Messiah of the Gospel as a fallible being—as being deficient in knowledge ; more so, indeed, than ordinary men of the present age ! And, what is very remarkable, Bishop Colenso brings forward Scripture to support his false views (just as Satan did in tempting our Lord) ; for, Bishop Colenso brings a verse from St. Luke, which he either wrests, or misunderstands, so as to give a shadow of plausibility to his arguments.

The verse is, “ Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man ; ” from which the Bishop argues, with (at first sight) some reason, that our Lord’s wisdom grew, and therefore was not perfect at first.

I must explain this verse thoroughly, for I feel sure that even the Bishop himself will relinquish his claim to that verse, on weighing well the true explanation. And if so—if we come to the conclusion that Jesus was perfect God from His birth—perfect in knowledge, as in power—then, of course, the bare fact of His having quoted or commended any book of Scripture,

is sufficient proof of the truthfulness and divine origin of that particular book! A consideration that made me select this as the opening fallacy in the Bishop's structure.

What are we to understand, then, by *Luke ii. 32*? How did our Lord *grow in wisdom and in stature*? You will easily perceive by observing that, in no one single instance did our Lord make use of His supernatural power for His own relief while on earth! At the out-set, Satan tempted Him to do that very thing, in casting Himself from the temple heights, or by converting stone into bread to satisfy the cravings of His hunger. But, no, our Lord could hunger, but He would not exercise His divine power in satisfying that hunger. Even Satan must have known the power was present; and we know how our Lord readily exercised it to feed others. (*Matt. xiv. 21.*) As also in turning water into wine, at the marriage festival. I repeat, then, that in no one single instance did our Lord work a miracle on behalf of His own human nature; else it could not have said,—“He was tempted in all respects,” &c. (*Heb. iv. 15.*) The quelling of the raging sea was not for Himself; because, as if to show it, He shortly after was seen walking on the sea! In fact, Jesus came to minister unto others, not to Himself! The sympathy He showed for every sufferer was intended to be a lesson to us, of the like sympathy He still exercises on our behalf, before His Father's throne. The various maladies He cured by a word, or touch, were types of our spiritual diseases, which can only be healed by going to Him as our Physician, our Intercessor, and Redeemer. In no one single instance, while on earth, did He withhold relief—supernatural relief, when relief was implored.

We come to the conclusion, therefore, that the divine power was always present, though never exercised on His own behalf. And therein I can trace out the solution of that verse,—“He grew in wisdom and in stature.” For, you will perceive, whilst Jesus was yet an infant, nobody came to be relieved; consequently, people were not aware of His Divine

Power—it was not displayed. And, indeed, in His after ministry, faith in His power was one marked condition on which alone relief was afforded,—“Believest thou that I am able to do this?” “According to thy faith be it unto thee!” (Matt. ix. 29.) So that, as an infant, ere man had seen some token of his miraculous power, they would have no reason to esteem the infant Jesus with any peculiar regard. As, however, Jesus advanced from infancy to manhood, and, day by day, came more in contact with his neighbours and kinsmen, so much the more would they discover, and value, not merely a readiness to help them at every opportunity; but, more than this, they would learn that He had extraordinary ability to do so. Every fresh act of grace would afford an increased proof of His supernatural power (called in Scripture, the Wisdom of God); so that as the child grew in years, He also grew in importance amongst the surrounding people. In Him they had a constant friend, whose presence seemed to insure a blessing; and, as they discovered day by day the power that lay hidden in their youthful benefactor, so did their estimation of Him grow—it kept pace with the display of His supernatural power; and, so Scripture tells us, “He grew in wisdom, and in favour with men.”

But, observe, the very act of doing this (being the fulfilment of His Heavenly Father’s purpose), accounts for the expression that He grew in favour *with God, as well as man*. As the voice from Heaven said,—“This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And as our Lord said,—“I do always the things which please Him.”

Further, we may trace this divine nature, present with the human nature, from the moment our Lord was born. Thus we read of the Eastern magi, coming from their far country by the guidance of God, and of their *worshipping* the new-born babe! Now, observe, these men were still under the guidance of God, when they worshipped the infant Jesus; because we read, directly after, that God warned them to return home another way. Surely, God who warned them to come so far, to behold

the Messiah, and warned them also how to return,—I say, surely He would have warned them not to render divine homage to the infant, if He had been in any way inferior to the Deity!

Again, we read, that at the age of twelve years, our Lord astonished the learned Jewish doctors in the temple—"Hearing and asking them questions." And, even at that early age, claiming the title of Sonship to God,—“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (*Luke xi. 49.*) And though readers are apt to regard the miracle at Cana, of Galilee, as our Lord’s *first miracle*; yet it is apparent, on second thoughts, that the expression,—“This beginning of miracles did Jesus, in Cana, of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him there.”—I say, on closer inspection, it will be apparent that this does not mean the first miracle Jesus wrought; but merely the first he *wrought publicly, after he had chosen his disciples*, and had commenced his ministry. I say this is apparent, because Jesus, and His mother, being only visitors at the festival, it is not to be supposed that she would go to Him for a supply of wine, unless she had been in the habit of making known her necessities to Him. In fact, her suggestion to the servants—“whatsoever he saith unto you, do it”—that alone is a proof that she expected a miracle! And, consequently, was acquainted with His miraculous powers.

And now see how marvellously our Lord’s two-fold nature was exhibited in His reply to His mother—“Woman, what have I to do with thee?” So long as her importunities were confined to His human power, or human nature, of course as His mother she had a claim on His obedience as her Son: but, beyond that, when she trespassed on His divine prerogative, and claimed a miracle, He reminded her she was but woman, and not God: that she (though mother of His human nature,) was not mother of His divine nature: in fact, that He was utterly distinct. “Woman, what have I to with thee?” (*John xi. 4.*) She was woman only; He was God as

well as man. Which, you will remember, our Lord taught in another place, by shewing that though He was David's Son, yet David, speaking by inspiration, called him Lord ! Because He was David's Lord a thousand years before He came in the flesh, to appear as David's Son. "Yea, before Abraham was, I am ;" said our Lord.

Having thus pointed out, at considerable length, the Bishop's error respecting our Lord's twofold nature, as regards the verse on which he founds this part of his argument, I will endeavour to make it equally clear that the learned doctor has made some very grave mistakes in his astronomical assertions. Because, if we can prove that *he is at fault, both in his divinity and science*, we may at least rest assured that his inability to adjust science to scripture, is no proof that one or the other is wrong.

To simplify matters, I will proceed directly to the Bishop's grand misstatement, about the sun and moon. On that error of comprehension Bishop Colenso builds up a miserable, unwarrantable, and presumptuous attempt to contradict all the Bible statements respecting the sun, and moon, and stars ; I say miserable, because I hope to shew presently, the utter absurdity of his inference ; and far more presumptuous, because real astronomers—men like Sir Isaac Newton, who were thoroughly conversant with their calling in every respect ; men not likely to fall into such an error as Bishop Colenso does about the sun and moon—I say, these great men who discovered the laws by which the Almighty rules the firmament, these men were well acquainted with all that the Bible says about astronomy ; and yet so far from finding any contradiction to the Bible, they did the very reverse. What comparison did Sir Isaac Newton draw between his own unrivalled discoveries and God's incomprehensible workings ? Sir Isaac said, he felt like a little child standing on the sea shore, contemplating the ocean, and forming his opinion of what it contained by the little shells and stones cast up upon the beach. What, also,

did a certain great infidel astronomer confess; on tracing back the number of years requisite (at the present trifling rate of divergence,) to bring the sun and the heavenly concave to what had been, apparently, their original starting point? Why, the infidel astronomer found it would be just as many years as the Bible history gives to the creation of the world! And that infidel was obliged to confess that "It was very strange, though true!" I ask the Bishop, therefore, whether he thinks that Moses was far advanced in astronomy from the fact of his having thus rightly fixed the world's starting point, according to recent discoveries of science? Or I ask him, seriously, is it not more reasonable that Moses was inspired to write truths which science only discovered three thousand years later? Is it not reasonable that God's record should be literally true, from first to last; stamped, as it is, by so many miracles, and fulfilled prophecies; any one of which is equally wonderful as that of inspiring Moses to write the Pentateuch.

But to proceed; the Bishop chooses for his point of attack on Bible astronomy, that passage which relates to Joshua's battle with the Amorites, at Makkedah, when the Lord cast down great stones upon the Amorites, and when also the sun stood still and the moon stayed. (*Joshua* x. 13.)

In attempting to contradict this, the Bishop has shewn his unaccountable shallowness in practical astronomy. His own words are, "Not only must the earth's diurnal rotation on its axis be stopped, but its annual motion also through space." There lies part of his mistake. Because the earth's annual motion makes the sun appear to travel eastward, and would favour the phenomenon rather than otherwise! But considered alone, for even a day, the earth's annual motion would not give the sun an apparent motion of more than one degree, (or four minutes of time) which every practical astronomer will admit, even with our improved instruments, is almost unappreciable at noontide, when this is recorded as having occurred. Besides, the Bishop also will admit, on second thoughts, that even if one

degree could be appreciated at that hour of the day, instead of making the sun hasten to go down, it would have the opposite effect of making it *go back* one degree. Just as, at Hezekiah's recovery, the miraculous sign of the sun-dial going back, (which, by-the-bye, the Bishop condemns) would be fully accounted for, simply by the earth's diurnal motion slackening, (I do not say stopping) while its annual motion continued; or what would be the same thing, by the diurnal motion continuing as usual, while the annual motion was marvellously increased.

Again, the Bishop gets into quicksands, while attempting to upset Archdeacon Pratt's astronomy. The Bishop says—"The arresting of the earth's motion, while it might cause the appearance of the sun standing still, would not account for the moon staying. Whereas, the truth is, if the earth's rotary velocity were lessened for a few hours, (I do not say brought to a dead stop; nor does the Bible account require such a thing, as we shall see by and bye); if it were lessened materially but gradually, while the annual velocity went on, or even increased, the phenomenon described in Joshua (x. 13) would happen without interfering with the inhabitants of our globe, or with the moon's duties, except that at setting she would seem to linger a few minutes beyond the proper time; just as Scripture seems purposely to have worded it. The sun apparently *stood still*, and the moon only *stayed*; which, on the supposition of the earth's rotary motion being lessened, would be the very appearance; since the moon would then appear to move about twenty-eight times faster than the sun, in the wrong direction. How strange that one of Bishop Colenso's reputation should thus overlook one of the most simple practical truths; or that he should confound the earth's diurnal with its annual motion; or should suppose that *the moon's velocity through space* is governed by the earth's *diurnal motion about its axis*!

Now let us briefly apply science to the fact, as given in the Bible. The event is recorded as taking place soon after the

equinox, consequently when the days had about twelve hours light. Also it occurred at noontide—"The sun stood still in the *midst of heaven*, and it hasted not to go down about the time of a day." That is, the six remaining hours of daylight were, by a miracle, extended into *a whole day*; that is, into twelve hours; or, in other words, the diurnal velocity was just halved; so that instead of being a velocity of one thousand miles per hour, as usual, at the equator, it would require the velocity to be reduced to a mean of five hundred miles per hour, during that particular afternoon; whilst its yearly motion went on, as at present, at the marvellous mean rate of more than one thousand miles a minute!*

Science, then, teaches us this stupendous truth, that just while the seconds hand of a watch is performing one brief minute, our vast globe has shot through space more than *a thousand actual miles*; so noiselessly, so smoothly, and so completely and firmly held in the hollow of God's Almighty hand, that we inhabitants cannot feel the slightest sign of motion; and, indeed, are only conscious of it by observing the path traversed amidst the "spangled firmament on high!" And, as though that were not sufficiently marvellous, science also teaches us that the earth, like the rifle ball, has a spinning motion, of one thousand miles per hour, as it hurries along its annual course with more than electric speed! Science teaches this; and, as we have seen, all that science would require to adjust things to meet the circumstances mentioned by Joshua, is that the thousand mile per minute velocity should remain as before, while the one thousand per hour was halved, and reduced gradually to a mean velocity of five hundred per hour, during the specified time. And, I ask, is it *too hard to believe that God, who controls the earth in its before-named velocities, could, if He sees fit, alter those velocities to suit His sovereign purpose?*

* We say one thousand miles for the sake of round numbers, the actual mean velocity being about eleven hundred miles per hour.

What, however, will go home to many minds, is a more simple reflection. They will remember that God had displayed His miraculous power in Egypt by the ten plagues; afterwards that He did so by the miraculous pillar of cloud and fire—by making a path through the Red Sea—by sending manna, quails, and water from the hard rock; Jordan's waters were parted, Jericho's walls fell down. What more could God do to convince His people that He was their Lord God? Why, He could shew them that even the sun and moon were subject to His command. This was His closing miracle, and the most amazing, as though to be a constant monitor against their natural tendency of rendering worship to the sun and moon.

How remarkable, too, that a somewhat similar phenomenon (in converting the noonday sun into darkness) should be the closing scene of our Lord's miraculous career. Every disease had already proved subject to His command; the elements had obeyed His voice; the dead had risen at His summons; and to close the category, the sun, for a time, surrendered his power to give light, while the true Light of the earth was expiring on the cross! Oh, how wonderful the link that unites the Holy Scriptures, and gives them a power which no adversary can resist. And how treacherous of men who profess to serve God, and to value science—I say, how vainly treacherous for them to attempt to set the one in opposition to the other; unless, indeed, they desire to banish God's doings entirely from men's minds, to obliterate the knowledge of God once more from the earth, and to render void the Great Sacrifice once made, whereby the awakened sinner may find access to a merciful God, and may obtain pardon from a reconciled Father.

In connexion with this part of the Bishop's objection to the Scriptures, let me notice several of the similar objections that he strings together as bye-gone fables; but which, as I hope to show, are in no way contrary to the revelations of science. Thus, when the last day of the world is described in eight

distinct places at least (*Psalm* cii. 26—*Isaiah* xiv. 12—*Ezek.* xxxii. 7, 8—*Joel* ii. 31, iii. 15—*Matt.* xxiv. 29—*2 Pet.* iii. 10—*Rev.* vi. 14.), as being attended with an utter disruption of the law which at present steers this globe amidst the starry firmament, at the prodigious velocity before mentioned, equal to the journey from London to Calcutta and back in half an hour. I say science teaches us, as the Bishop will admit, that our globe has that velocity at present; and Scripture tells us, that, at the end of the world, all this shall be altered! And how reasonable to suppose it should be! At present the sun and moon are marvellously arranged to make our globe most serviceable and most comfortable for man. Our nights are not intruded on by the covetousness of avaricious employers—save gas! Our colder regions produce things necessary for the existence of the inhabitants of the hotter climes; whilst those tropical zones supply our luxuries and comforts! Yes, and the more densely populated northern hemisphere has about nineteen days more of the sun's benefit than the southern, with its vast area of ocean, and scant population. Science teaches this! But, when men have done with the earth, is there any reason to suppose that all this providence shall continue? After God has ceased to use this earth, as man's school-room for heaven, will He continue to warm and light it? And when He comes forth to smite the earth with a curse, then can we wonder at a revolution of the whole course of nature! Yea, will not the present sources of blessing be converted into sources of cursing! What says Scripture? "The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." (*Matt.* xxiv. 29.) And, I affirm, science in no way contradicts this; rather does it throw a marvellous light on the case, for *it is modern science that has taught us what those powers of the heavens are!* A few generations back, sceptical divines, perchance, might have called that expression a mere figure of speech; but, happily, science has revealed to us what the powers of the heavens are.

It has unfolded to us that marvellous attractive power of the sun, which keeps all the heavenly bodies from breaking away from the bounds of their appointed orbits, and the no less wonderful power of gravity that pertains to our globe ! Science teaches us that if that attractive power were diminished, in the least, or if the tie were cut altogether, our globe would be adrift comparatively amongst the stars : save that once in every cycle of years it would return to the spot from whence cut loose, as though to remind the other stars of the existence of the condemned captive. And bearing in mind that there are already two vast globes, (Mercury and Venus),* chained within scorching range of the sun ; and also bearing in mind that Scripture tells us, in thirteen places, that this world shall be burned up, with all that is therein (as described 2 *Pet.* iii. 10.)—I say, bearing these facts in mind, may we not expect to find this our globe, after we have done with it, will undergo a miracle, and be cast into a new orbit round and round the sun, at a mean distance, so near to it, that instead of giving light to the eyes, the sun produces fearful darkness ; and, instead of being a source of comfort and life, as at present, it then will become a source of misery and torment ?—as Scripture teaches (*Rev.* xvi. 8, 9) of power being given to the sun to scorch men with fire. And (in verse 10) it speaks of the kingdom being full of darkness, and that they gnawed their tongues for pain !

Oh, well can I understand that godless men would like to obliterate this sentence if they could ! And equally well can I understand their enmity to such a fearful sentence. Because, just as a criminal about to be executed, would dread being carried through the public streets previously, with men's fingers all pointing ; so would those who are hurrying to that destruction dread the gaze of their dear relatives, and neighbours, and fellow-beings, if it were branded on their brows, or printed on their backs, that they were consigned to everlasting

* Approximately, we may consider Mercury as at one-third, and Venus at two-thirds, of the Earth's distance from the Sun.

burning. Oh, why not rather consider that Jesus Christ came to reconcile God and sinners, and to open a way of escape from that judgment to come! instead of rejecting that Saviour, and shutting their eyes to the threatened condemnation.

Reader, consider the traces, and the direct assurances, contained in Scripture of such a termination of the world. After the deluge, when God set the bow in the cloud, as a token that the world should no more be drowned, what was the promise? Why, that “while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” (*Gen. viii. 22.*) This is God’s covenant, but only *so long as the earth remaineth*. Clearly then, this alone implies that the earth is not always to remain in its present orbit; and that, when it does quit its present path, then, that those annual seasons of summer and winter, spring and autumn, are to be no more; and its daily rotation of day and night is then to cease for ever. So again, David, when he wrote his prophecy for “*a generation to come*,” and foretold our days, viz., that the Gentiles should fear the name of the Lord (*Psaln cii. 15*)—in that same Psalm goes on to declare that “God laid the foundations of the earth, and that the heavens are the work of His hands—but that they shall perish, while He endures—they all shall wax old, like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed.” (*Psaln cii., 25, 26.*)

Thus Isaiah, also, without any human instruction in the then undiscovered laws of gravity, is inspired to write (*Isa. xiii. 13*)—“Therefore will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place.” And again (*Isa. xxiv. 19*)—“The earth is utterly broken down—the earth is clean dissolved—the earth is moved exceedingly—the earth shall reel to and fro, like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage.” And then, verse 23 continues,—“The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed,” &c. A description of the last days, almost word for word, like that given by *St. Matt. xxiv. 29*;

St. Mark xiii. 24, 25, 26; *Luke* x. 25, 26, 27. So also, the Prophet *Joel* iii. 15, speaks of the sun and moon being darkened. While *St. Peter*, in his 2nd Epistle, is still more explicit, and says, chap. iii. 10,—“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” All of which, remember, would take place instantly, if this globe of ours was to be snatched from its present orbit, and fixed within a nearer range of the sun. Because its motion towards the sun would *apparently* fulfil the Bible description (*Matt.* xxiv. 29; *Mark* xiii. 25) of the stars falling, since the position of the entire celestial concave would then change with respect to the earth. Consequently, all the Bishop’s difficulty, in this respect, hinges upon the possibility of a new orbit being assigned to the earth! And that possibility the Bishop will admit is not impossible, or contrary to the laws of science. I maintain, indeed, it is not more miraculous than the speed of a thousand miles a minute, which science has discovered belongs to our present globe!

Thus far I have treated of those points, which from the Bishop of Natal’s book, I clearly perceive are his confirmed opinions about the Saviour, the eternal punishment, and the revelations respecting the last day. Therein is the real battle field. As to his attack on the Pentateuch, that is merely a necessary consequence of the deeper disease. We will, however, next proceed to clear away some of the most important imputations that he has cast upon the Holy Book.

Begin with those two divine enactments, which the Bishop designates as “brutal usages”—(*Exod.* xxi. 4; *Exod.* xxi. 20, 21)—whereby Moses was directed to regulate the duties between masters and periodical servants. The Bishop clearly misapprehends the *periodical service* there contemplated, and confounds it with the condition of African slavery as at present existing; whereas, by the 16th verse of the same chapter, he will perceive

that it was a capital punishment to buy or sell a Hebrew servant: and, consequently, that the person of a servant differed materially from that of a slave at the present time.

The matter stood simply thus—that in the absence of any poor-law to support the indigent Israelites, they were not left to starve, but were to become the servants of their more prosperous kinsmen or other masters. Similarly, in the absence of a bankruptcy law like our own, a temporary protection was provided for any insolvent, by assigning himself and goods over to some wealthy individual, for a stipulated period of six years: who, in consideration of the amount paid to the creditors (see *Matt.* xv. 25), would have the services of that bankrupt for the time (a law that might well be revived); and by another law, all debts were cancelled every seven years (*Deut.* xv.), so that the man was secure from his creditors, to go and set up afresh.

I say bearing this in mind, you will soon perceive how rashly Bishop Colenso ventures to pass his judgment on those portions of Scripture he does not fully understand. The first of those enactments is, that on joining himself to a wealthy master for six years, any indigent Hebrew, if he were a bachelor, and remained a bachelor, or if he came as a married man, might quit his employer's service; and if he chose to go and set up for himself, then (*Deut.* xv. 14), his master was enjoined to furnish him liberally with all things necessary for the purpose. If, however, the man should choose to remain, then there was a regular ceremony prescribed, by which the man might for ever after claim kindred with that master's family, or clan. He became a free servant, so to speak; that is, free in domestic affairs, and a vassal in political matters only—much after the fashion of the armed retainers of the nobility in olden days.

And that ceremony was very expressive, both as regards the responsibility incurred by the master, and the obligation contracted by the servant. The man's ear was bored with an awl, in the presence of the judges of the tribe, and nailed to the master's door-post; implying thereby, that for ever the man's

ear was to bear a mark of its obligation to obey the master's summons ; while the print of the awl on the door-post was the servant's guarantee of the right of protection and maintenance, as an actual member of the adopted family or clan.

Again, it was enacted that if the man came as a bachelor, and married into his master's family during his servitude, but at the expiration of the six years desired to break off the connexion then, that to a certain extent a prohibition should be placed on the man. He might not totally sever the connexion (virtually contracted by his marriage into the family). If he chose to depart, and try his fortunes elsewhere, he might go ; but he could not compel his wife, or her children, to relinquish the claims they had on their own clan. He married on this condition, with his eyes open ; therefore, there would be no injustice in fulfilling it. Rather the fact of his wife and family remaining as members of the clan would be a guarantee for his own free reception back again, in the event of a second unsuccessful attempt to establish his fortunes ; whereas, if successful, the means would be at his command to redeem his family, and at the same time repay his former master for his original obligations ; which, to my mind, displays a masterpiece of equity towards all the parties interested—master, servant, wife, and children.

Simple as the above explanation of that enactment appears, I think the second one that the Bishop objects to admits of a more simple solution. In *Exod.* xxi. 20, 21, it is enacted : “ If a master smite one of these servants with a rod, that he die, the master shall be surely punished (in the original it is “ avenged ”). Notwithstanding, if the servant survives a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money.” Now, the Bishop and his Zulu convert were puzzled at this ; whereas, by a due consideration of what constituted the law of murder and what of manslaughter under the Jewish dispensation (*Num.* xxxv. 9—28), the Bishop will be able to interpret that enactment quite satisfactorily to the next Zulu that inquires of him, as follows—namely, that under any circumstances a murderer should be put

to death (*Num.* xxxv. 31); consequently, an investigation would always be held as to the cause of death. The object of the special enactment being that if the servant died there and then, on the spot, under the chastisement, then that should be considered murder, *without any further proof*, and the judge should punish the master with death. If, however, the servant survived a day or two, then that the death should not be hastily adjudged as murder, until the authorities had time thoroughly to investigate the matter, so as to decide whether the death arose from malice, accident, or from some natural cause in the constitution of the deceased. But if from that investigation it was clearly a murder, then of course it came under the ordinary laws of murder.

Moreover, there is good reason for not including such a case under the city of refuge act, because the head of a tribe would have the protection of his own clan against the kinsman's avenger of blood, though not against the judges of the land.

Also, it should be borne in mind that the position of a master with respect to a body of servants, far removed from police supervision or magisterial jurisdiction, would much resemble that of a man-of-war's crew on a voyage, where the maintenance of discipline and prevention of mutual violence amongst the men (not to speak of subordinate oppression always ready to develop itself), renders it imperative on the chief officer to administer salutary chastisement on the spot, without waiting the formal decision of a home tribunal.

We will now make a slight digression from more serious topics, in order to show the real shallowness of Bishop Colenso's argumentative powers, and to point out how easily a person may mislead himself while attempting to estimate the early ages of the world's history according to our notions of the present day.

Thus Bishop Colenso ridicules the Scripture statement that the Canaanites were not rooted out all at once, but little by little, lest the wild beasts should increase upon the newly-arrived emigrants. The Bishop founds his opinion upon the condition of his own diocese, Natal, which, corresponding with Palestine

in almost every respect, has been cleared, he says, of wild beasts, by only a few thousand settlers, in a very brief space of time. But, reader, ask yourself if it is fair thus to draw hasty comparisons, *and leave gunpowder out of consideration?* Would any number of Israelites, with their slings and goads, or even spears and swords, do the same execution amongst lions, and leopards, and wolves, that a very few expert marksmen would do with their unerring rifles? The Bishop can see no difference! I ask, therefore, whether such an umpire (be he bishop or layman) is at all capable of rightly weighing the important matters on which our eternity depends? Are his rash words sufficient to turn the scale, and set you at variance with the teaching of your Holy Bible? I trust not indeed.

We will next consider Dr. Colenso's difficulty about the number of Jacob's family, described in *Gen.* xlvi. 26, as 66 persons, in *Gen.* xlvi. 27, as 70, and in *Acts* vii. 14, as 75 souls. The Bishop argues that this diversity of numbers proves an error somewhere, and therefore destroys the infallibility of Scripture. I reply, the reader will perceive, if the Bishop does not, that each of the three verses is strictly correct, and without at all interfering with the others. Thus, *Gen.* xlvi. 26, speaks only of *children of Jacob that went down into Egypt*; expressly stating that Joseph's household and the patriarchs' wives were not counted. These without Jacob made 66, as any one will perceive by counting the names. Verse 27, however, as expressly mentions Joseph and his two sons as extras, who, therefore, with Jacob, exactly brought the 66 up to 70. Similarly, *Acts* vii. 14, has an easy solution, because the 75 there mentioned are not called *sons of Jacob*, but *kindred of Joseph*; which, of course, would include others besides Joseph's brethren. Moreover, it must be observed that Joseph "sent and called" these 75; consequently Joseph and his two sons were not included. The 75, therefore, were made up as follows: of his 66 brethren (mentioned *Gen.* xlvi. 26), and Jacob, who made the number up to 67, which leaves eight persons whose names are not men-

tioned. Who, then, were those eight of his kindred? Why, surely, his brothers' wives, mentioned, but not reckoned, in the previous census.

Nor is it very unreasonable to suppose that there were no more than eight of the brothers' wives surviving, as we know Judah's wife was dead, and Joseph was already in Egypt; so that of the ten remaining brothers, the eldest of whom was about 60 years of age, we may well suppose that at least two were widowers.

As to the question raised by the Bishop about the two representatives of the deceased brothers (Er and Onan), who were unborn at the time when Jacob went down into Egypt. All I need observe is, that Er and Onan, though dead, undoubtedly each of them left households behind them; that is, had each a retinue of dependants and herdsmen, with tents and flocks. These would preserve their distinctive appellations of Er's household and Onan's household until such time as the heirs and successors were actually born, who were probably forewarned to Jacob as being of the children of Pharez.

Pass on to the Bishop's difficulty about the estimated numbers of the Israelites, at the time of the Exodus. Scripture clearly implies that the Israelitish refugees in Egypt averaged about two millions, though it does not give the actual numbers: save, it says—they were more, and mightier, than the Egyptians. (*Exod.* i. 9.) Bishop Colenso wonders how the captive nation could multiply so marvellously in about two centuries; and estimates, that under the most favourable circumstances, those 70 children of Jacob could not have increased to more than 5000.

Reader, weigh the following solution of the difficulty. I hold, and Bishop Colenso will admit, that because a man was an *Israelite*, he was not necessarily of Israel's *royal blood*. Any stranger became a political Israelite by lawfully joining himself to Israel's clan, in the outward rite of circumcision. (*Gen.* xxii. 23.) Abraham's entire household were thus circumcised; and, consequently, those 318 trained servants, born in Abraham's

house (*Gen.* xiv. 14), were Israelites from that time forward, though not of the seed royal.

This will prove to be the key of the riddle. For although, in eastern phraseology, the chief of a tribe is universally deemed the political father; and, in that sense, Abraham was the father of his entire people; yet, according to our notions of the present day, Abraham was merely their chief, or prince, as described in *Gen.* xxiii. 6. So we find, during Abraham's life, the Philistines dared not stop the wells he digged: but directly Isaac assumed the chieftaincy they ventured to do so. (*Gen.* xxvi. 18.) Yet, as we find in verse 14 of the same chapter, Isaac was still a mighty prince: "He had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and great store of servants"—and, as Abimelech said, in verse 16, "Thou art much mightier than we."

Now observe, this clan of Abraham's would not only descend to Isaac, but would also pass to Jacob, by Esau's sale of the birthright, and also by virtue of Isaac's blessing. The very words of Isaac's blessing have an important meaning, which, under any other interpretation, would be meaningless. Part of that blessing runs thus—*Gen.* xxvii. 29., "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee." Whereas, Jacob had no brethren, but only one brother; so that the brethren, and mother's sons, clearly implied his political brethren, and the members of the clan, of which Rebecca was the queen mother.

This clan, therefore, even on the scale of increase adopted by Bishop Colenso, during the interval of 200 years from Abraham's battle to Isaac's death, would increase from 318 to at least 20,000, since no blight is recorded as having happened to Isaac. Nor do Bishop Colenso's suggestions hold good about Jacob's poverty at the time of Joseph's sale into bondage; because it should be observed, *Isaac was then still alive*, and lived 13 years after that event, as you will perceive from *Gen.* xxxv. 26, 27, that is, up to the very year that Joseph from the

dungeon interpreted Pharaoh's dream, and was made ruler over Egypt.

Jacob, therefore, only came into possession of the family chieftaincy just at the commencement of the foretold seven years of plenty. His 66 descendants, with his 20,000 vassals, were then residing at Hebron, about 250 miles from the capital of the Egyptian empire. And it is far from probable to suppose that the privileged tribe would break up, or grow impatient of control, under the mild sway of such an amiable prince as Jacob, at all events so long as the seven years of plenty lasted. When, however, the long famine succeeded those plenteous times, and the tribe found that there was no means of subsisting in that neighbourhood, whilst there was plenty of corn in Egypt, then we can imagine that the clan might partially break up, for a time, to seek the necessaries of life, which were beyond Jacob's power to supply to his people as Pharaoh did to his. Doubtless, in such a contingency, many of Jacob's tribe would naturally go down into Egypt; I say *naturally*, from the fact that many of them were Egyptians originally (*Gen.* xxii. 16, *Gen.* xvi. 1); and that many others were from Gerar, on the direct high-road from Hebron to Egypt. (*Gen.* xx. 14.)

Jacob would perceive how this newly-acquired people were gradually falling away from him, as the famine advanced towards the third year; and from them, probably, it was he ascertained there was corn in Egypt. (*Gen.* xlii. 2.) That, too, would account for Jacob sending the treasure of specie into Egypt by his sons, rather than by his servants, since, if those servants found themselves safely in Egypt, with plenty of money in hand, it might be a strong inducement not to return into a land where famine prevailed.

Again, if we had no other testimony, *that one single expression* (*Gen.* xlviii. 32), that it would be an abomination for an Egyptian to eat bread with a Hebrew—I say that single expression would shew that the Hebrews were *a recognised tribe* at that time. Joseph expressed apprehensions that the ten brothers

were spies sent to see the distressed state of Egypt. Evidently, therefore, the Hebrew people were not merely one single family of sixty people, since the Egyptians considered the Hebrews as a rival power, which proves that those sixty mentioned were only the royal family of the tribe ; Jacob being the prince, and Jacob's actual descendants the seed royal.

Carry this consideration another step. See, the aged patriarch Jacob, and his children and tribe, all located in Egypt. There, of course, even though his people might be inclined to rally round their former chief, yet the jealousy of the Egyptians would make it hazardous to assert, openly, their allegiance ; though, by-the-bye, they would do so to Joseph, as long as he lived, without such danger. We may therefore take for granted that no special chieftaincy was exercised after Jacob went down into Egypt. The twelve patriarchs would each be privately regarded as dormant chiefs—as princes whose time was not yet come ; and so, while preserving the common bond of circumcision, which served as a national distinction, the people would gradually assume twelve distinctive divisions, as adherents of those twelve families.* Just as Esau's children became dukes of fourteen tribes.

Passing over an interval of about sixty years from the death of Joseph, we arrive at the period of Moses's birth. At that time, this tribe of 20,000, by the Bishop's scale, would have increased to about a million and a quarter ; while the actual children of Jacob would, by the Bishop's estimate, be under 5000 ; which would well account for Pharaoh's speech, *Exod.* i. 9, where the reader must be pleased to observe—Pharaoh said, not that the children of Israel are mightier than we, but the *people* of the children of Israel. This distinction then, made by Pharaoh, between the actual children of Israel, and the people of the children of Israel, is very significant ; because, in

* Jacob's dying blessing stipulated that the Promised Land should be divided amongst the twelve families ; which would necessitate the division of the family adherents, or common people, into twelve clans.

these precautionary measures, adopted by Pharaoh, his aim would be to weaken the ex-royal family of Israelites, and not to oppress the masses. Undoubtedly, Pharaoh would draw a wide distinction between Jacob's actual descendants, and the descendants of those people who, though vassals of Jacob two centuries before, had (he might suppose) become thoroughly naturalized Egyptians. Moreover, it strikes me as very probable, that Jacob's family, bearing in mind God's promise to Abraham, that the tribe should come forth from the Egyptian bondage, after the fourth generation (*Gen. xv. 16*), would about that time be secretly agitating for a restoration of their nationality. I can imagine the twelve royal families of Israel exercising a nominal chieftaincy over the common people of their ancient tribe, from the day Jacob came down into Egypt. I can believe that the rite of circumcision, to a certain extent, assisted in keeping up a sort of free-masonry amongst the entire refugee tribe, from the princes to the lowest grade of clansmen. And I can imagine that those nobles of the tribe would be anxious to restore their tribe to independence, even while these people themselves were almost listless in the matter. And so it seems to me, Pharaoh's policy would be to tell the common people of Israel's tribe that they were free from their original chiefs. The very motive that prompted Pharaoh to degrade those chiefs would make him more conciliatory to the masses at large, whom he sought to win over from their sway. Consequently, we may believe that Pharaoh's edict, to destroy the men children, applied only to the 5000 actual sons of Israel (the seed royal), and not to the people of Israel at large.

This, too, would account for many of the difficulties Bishop Colenso brings forward: for instance, on such a supposition, we can understand that Moses and Aaron should be in daily communication with the five thousand nobility of the tribe. Indeed, with a staff of five thousand officers, we can readily understand how the entire tribe might be marshalled on a given

night, after some months' preparation, and a clear fortnight's notice of the identical hour.

Again, this supposition that the Israelites consisted of a two-fold grade—that is of nobles and plebeians, and that the Egyptian jealousy only extended to the nobility who were actually descended from Israel—I say, this accounts for another of Bishop Colenso's difficulties, namely, that a large body of fugitives were armed and trained to move in marching order; because there is every probability the Egyptians employed their common people as the lowest grade of soldiers. Just as in the case of our Sepoys, and of the Poles in the Russian armies, it is found that levies may be safely made from amongst a subject people, even though it were dangerous to officer those troops with their own nobility. And such a supposition accounts for the somewhat singular fact recorded in *Exod.* xiv. 7, that Pharaoh's horsemen and chariots pursued after the Israelites, but no foot soldiers! Why not? Had the infantry all mutinied, and started off under their native Israelitish chiefs? Or was it that the remainder were so tainted with the same infection, that it was considered safest only to take that portion of the army which could be relied on as thoroughly Egyptian?

Once more, unless these circumcised dependants of the ancient Israelitish tribe are accounted for elsewhere, it is only reasonable to suppose that they were incorporated amongst the twelve Tribes. Undoubtedly, Reuben's family, of 46,500 males, consisted largely of household dependants—and the same with each of the other princely families. The government of those families being entrusted to different grades of officers, selected from the actual descendants of the Patriarchs themselves. By which arrangement, Moses had the same control over the entire congregation, that the Commander-in-Chief of an army has over the different divisions. And when they assembled to him at the door of the tabernacle, it does not mean (as Bishop Colenso tries to make out) that all the vast array stood in a line twenty miles long before the door;

but merely that Moses (not the congregation) stood at the door of the tabernacle; and that the officers of the people gathered next to him, and their captains and lieutenants conveyed the intelligence to the ranks. Which, by-the-bye, would be much facilitated, when we recollect that the various tribes were commanded to encamp separately, all round the camp of Levi, where the tabernacle was pitched. Nor, on such a supposition, does Bishop Colenso's argument hold good, about the difficulty of maintaining the sanitary condition of a camp the size of all London; because, if we consider such an army divided up into a dozen distinct camps, each under thoroughly efficient control, and moreover, remember that the only occupation of the people, from the oldest to the youngest, without exception, was to go forth from the camp at daybreak, and gather the manna—I say, bearing this in mind, the difficulty ceases. And the comparison drawn between them, and a population like London—earning its daily bread by the sweat of their brow—is as unwarrantable as that a regiment of the household brigade could not possibly do their duty if they kept neat and trim, because it was certain that an equal number of pitmen could not earn an honest livelihood without being begrimed with dirt and dust.

Again the Bishop asserts that pigeons were unobtainable in sufficient numbers for the sacrifices of such a vast assembly. But, who that is acquainted with the instinct of the pigeon (like the bee) in traversing vast distances, guided probably by the scent of food—I say, who that reflects on the quantity of manna that covered the surface of the ground, all round the Israelitish camp, can wonder if some of the countless flocks of pigeons were thus attracted across the narrow arm of the Red Sea from the neighbouring plains of Africa! And think you not that the quails were brought thither by a similar attraction?

Next, as to Bishop Colenso's wonder, how Aaron and his sons could offer up the innumerable sacrifices, and perform the varied and multifarious amount of duties required of them, we

need only reply that *their supervision of the work, and their formal dedication of the offerings or sacrifices at stated intervals, probably at hours of prayer, would properly be regarded as their actual performance of the entire ceremony.* Just as the signature of an Act of Parliament in a moment of time gives force to the work of hundreds of heads and hands, engaged during weeks and months previously. It is never supposed that the Sovereign actually penned the whole Act, or even drew out the various clauses; but that the minister performed the documentary part of the matter and the Sovereign merely the official completion thereof.

Once more, though Bishop Colenso does not dispute the fact of the manna being sent, miraculously, to feed the Israelites: yet he does assert that it is impossible to believe that the vast flocks and herds, belonging to the wanderers, also found sustenance in that wilderness. I reply, that without any additional miracle, the two miracles of manna and the ever-present pillar of cloud, would cause even that sandy desert to yield abundance of pasturage. The Bishop ought to have known this, seeing he must be aware of the rapid and almost spontaneous growth of herbage in tropical climes, wherever moisture is afforded to the parched soil. But, reader, imagine the effect of a daily shower of nutriment, like the oily manna! How long would it be before the ground, far and near, all round the twelve Israelitish camps, became thoroughly saturated with the melted fatness of the superfluous manna? And, with the heavy dews, need we wonder at there being an abundant supply of pasturage, where previously all had been barren wilderness?

And this reminds us of another of Bishop Colenso's objections; namely, about the supply of water necessary for so vast an assemblage, besides their flocks and herds. He forgets that it is expressly recorded that, during the forty years, "They drank of that Rock which followed them; and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.) Evidently the Apostle referred to

the cloudy pillar, which, like a vast rock, was ever present; sometimes moving in advance of the Israelites, at others resting hard by them, and occasionally interposing betwixt them and the hostile tribes in their neighbourhood. This Rock, which guided, protected, and refreshed the Israelites, may well be regarded in its threefold sense, as a type of Christ; but beyond that, science enables us to trace out the effect of such a constant mass of cloudy vapour resting on the tops of mountains, like those of Arabia.

Thus it has been ascertained that the tops of mountains, being much colder than the plains below, have the remarkable power of abstracting large quantities of water from passing clouds. This at once solves the Bishop's difficulty. Because the effect of the great pillar of cloud, resting on the neighbouring mountains, would make them pour down with limpid streams. Traces of which, on those very mountains, even the Bishop admits, are extant to this very day!

And this reminds me of a few little incidents that will go far towards proving the connexion between that cloudy pillar and the supply of water. The Bible record tells us, that *on two occasions*, there was a *scarcity of water*. Once in the middle of the second month, after leaving Egypt; and the other about thirty years later. But, mark, the Bible does not tell us, directly, that the miraculous cloud had departed for a time, and therefore that that was the cause; though, as we shall proceed to shew, there is evident proof that such was really the case. Evidently the people were in a murmuring, discontented, mood; and God in displeasure withdrew His miraenlous cloud, till they were softened down, and humbled, by the scarcity of water.

Thus, at the first scarcity (*Exod. xvii. 7*), it is recorded that Moses called the place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying,—“Is the Lord among us or not?” Now God sees when men are in a frame of mind ripening for rebellion

against Him. Before the supply of water ceased, He perceived that the people had practically forgotten His recent deliverances. And when, in consequence, God withdrew His marvellous cloudy pillar, then the people had good reason to ask themselves—"Is God among us or not?"

Moreover, the reader will perceive, from the succeeding verse, that the hostile tribes of the desert also noticed the departure of the protecting cloud; because it tells us (ver. 8)—"Then came Amalek and fought with Israel." Those Amalekites, therefore, considered the removal of the cloud as a token of God's withdrawal of His protection, and hastened to take advantage of it.

And I think the manner in which relief was sent (ver. 6) proves that the cloud returned to its place on the rock, before Moses smote the rock. God said to Moses—"Behold, I will stand *before thee* there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it."

Similarly, at the second scarcity of water, we find that the people were in the same rebellious attitude; throwing the blame wholly on Moses, for bringing them into their troubles. A thing they could hardly have done whilst the cloudy pillar stood before their eyes, for Moses to point to and say—"You have not followed *me*, but have followed that cloudy pillar, that divine token of God's presence and guidance!"

And observe particularly, the command delivered to Moses. It was (*Numb.* xx. 8)—"Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together; thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes." Notice this; it does not say, speak to *any* rock, but to *some particular* rock. Surely it implies that rock which, till recently, had borne the thick cloudy pillar.

Therein, too, we can discover the secret of Moses' and Aaron's sin. Instead of ascribing the withdrawal of the fountains to the simultaneous withdrawal of the sacred cloud and God's presence, Moses and Aaron performed

the miracle as though some power of enchantment lay in themselves, or in the rod. They said, "Hear, ye rebels; must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" And we know that for this act of disobedience, in not sanctifying God in the eyes of the children of Israel, Moses and Aaron were not permitted to enter the promised land; a punishment not at all incommensurate with their offence; inasmuch as they, who for forty years had been the teachers and rulers of God's people, ought never to have forgotten, for an instant, the mainspring of all religion, namely, that God's presence is the fountain of every blessing. For omitting to teach this, and for presuming to act on their own account, and for their pride in creating a superstitious reverence for themselves, or their wand of office: I say, for this sin it was that Moses and Aaron were forbidden to cross the Jordan, or to enter the promised land.

Oh, Christian brethren, let me sum up the substance of these pages in that single reflection. If the Bible be (as even Bishop Colenso admits,) a fountain of Living Water, in some respects; I say, if the Bible be in any respect a guide to man's steps, then take heed lest you, or any teacher—be he bishop, priest, or deacon—act the transgression of Moses and Aaron over again, by overlooking the hand of God in that sacred Book. It was, indeed, a grievous sin not to sanctify the Almighty in the eyes of the people, at a time when He was going to work such a providential miracle for their relief! But, Christian brethren, it is possible to aggravate even that offence. And so I hold, that any Christian minister, who assembles his congregation before our Rock of Ages, cleft for us upon the cross, and tells them to drink of salvation from that open fountain, but meanwhile fails to sanctify the Lord in their eyes; that is, fails to teach the people that God was and is, incarnate, (1 *John* iv. 1, 2, 3) in the person of Jesus Christ; who fails to point out that Jesus was no less God than before His incarnation, although He veiled himself in flesh that He might converse with man, mouth to mouth; I say, any teacher who directs

men's eyes merely to the sacred wand of his own office, but fails to sanctify God in the eyes of the congregation, by not shewing that the spirit and teaching of Jesus are the same in the Old as in the New Testament—only that the former required prospective faith to understand it, while the latter requires retrospective faith; I say, in conclusion, that any teacher who endeavours to rob our Saviour, or one of His miracles, or a revelation, or a prophetic message, of its divine origin and commission, destroys the very essence of true religion, he acts the transgression of Massah and Meribah over again, and reduces worship to the level of idolatry: where the dumb log of wood or stone had neither power nor will to help itself or its devotees.

Yea, rather, my Christian brethren, if the Ruler of the universe be our God, then, I ask, is any thing too hard for Him to effect? Is any miracle too difficult for Him who steers our globe along at a thousand miles per minute? Is any blessing in store for man made perfect, too great to be credited—seeing what countless privileges man (sinful man, too) enjoys, more than the next highest creature of God's handiwork? Or, far above every other consideration, if any one will call to mind how the Lord Jesus Christ wrought miracles, declared His equality with the Father, (*John* xiv. 9, 10) foretold His resurrection from the dead, and fulfilled His prediction by rising on the third day; I say, if any Christian will reflect on this, he will be convinced that Jesus Christ was really the Son of God, and consequently that the death and sacrifice of that Son of God, and the warnings He gave of an eternal death, following after the natural death, were all designed for some great end—were designed for the purpose of rescuing man from Satan's power and Satan's doom.

If, therefore, Christian brethren, the mission of Christ on earth, and the sending of His prophets of old, all tended to this one grand object, is it right or reasonable to raise idle questions, or trifle with so solemn a subject? If the salvation of men be God's

good pleasure, then trust in the plan God has devised for that purpose. If the Bible be God's Word, receive it in faith and reverence. But halt not between two opinions. If the Lord be your God, follow Him, and do not attempt to make His word bend to your will, or to your ideas of right and wrong. And may God grant that every reader of this address may be enabled, by the Holy Spirit's influence, to renounce the first treacherous suggestions of unbelief, and abhor the doctrines recently put forth by those who boast in "the oppositions of science falsely so called."

The author of the above address had at first attached to it a simple description of the perfect harmony existing between science and the early chapters of Genesis; but, on reflection, thinks that an answer to Bishop Colenso's views ought to be made quite distinct from such a subject.

THE END.

Date Due

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